

REMARKS

Claims 31-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In response, Applicants amended claim 31 to clarify that the second recess extends between the thin-film element part and the side of said slider, and request withdrawal of the rejection based on this amendment.

Claims 19 and 30-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Matsuzaki (JP 03-132910 A). In response, Applicants amended independent claims 19 and 30 to include the feature of claim 27 that the first recess/recess has a top surface substantially parallel to the rail top surface, and respectfully traverse the rejection as it applies to the amended claims.

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that FIG. 5 of Matsuzaki shows a slider 1 having rails 11, 12 and rail top surface 113, 123. The Examiner further cites FIG. 7 of Matsuzaki as showing a curved recess within the upper-left-hand corner, which corresponds to the first recess of the present invention. However, the upper-left-hand corner recess identified by the Examiner does not have a top surface that is substantially parallel to the rail top surface, as now recited in the amended claims. More specifically, as noted by the Examiner with respect to the rejection of claim 27, the upper-left-hand corner recess of Matsuzaki is curved, which results in a curved top surface, unlike the planar surface formed by the rails 11, 12. For this reason, withdrawal of the §102 rejection of claims 19 and 30-32 is respectfully requested.

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuzaki. Applicants traverse the rejection for the reasons recited above with respect to the rejection of independent claim 19.

Since claim 22 depends upon claim 19, it necessarily includes all the features of its associated independent claim plus other additional features. Thus, Applicants submit that the §103 rejection of claim 22 has also been overcome for the same reasons mentioned above to overcome the rejection of independent claim 19. Applicants respectfully request that the §103 rejection of claim 22 also be withdrawn.

Claim 27 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuzaki in view of Chapin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,267,109). Since this claim is cancelled, the rejection is moot. However, since claims 19 and 30 incorporate the subject matter of claim 27, Applicants will respond to this rejection as it applies to the amended claims. Applicants traverse the rejection because there is no motivation to combine the references.

The curved recess of Matsuzaki is not the same as the first recess recited in claim 19, or the recess recited in claim 30. Matsuzaki does not describe the curved recess shown in the upper-left-hand corner of FIG. 7. Applicants believe that the recess of Matsuzaki was not formed intentionally, but instead during the production process of the slider. In the production process of a head slider a floating surface is polished. The end of the rail is easily ground during the polishing process, and Applicants respectfully believe that

the curved recess of Matsuzaki is formed during such polishing. However, this recess that is formed during the production process of the head slider cannot avoid contact between the head and the recording medium.

In contrast, the recess of independent claims 19 and 30 is formed to absorb the projection of the head element caused by thermal expansion. In order to absorb the projection of the head element, the recess is lower than the rail top surface and has a top surface which is substantially parallel to the rail top surface. Thus, the present invention has a purpose for creating the recess that is not taught or suggested by Matsuzaki.

In addition to the above, FIG. 5 of Matsuzaki shows the thin-film magnetic head elements 2 located at the ends of the rails 11, 12. Chapin, however, has a head element or transducer 38 located along a center line 60 of the slider. (See FIG. 4). This different location of the heads would result in difficulty in modifying the structure of Matsuzaki to include the recesses of Chapin. That is, if the recesses 78 and 80 of Chapin were incorporated into the structure of Matsuzaki, then further modification of the structure of Matsuzaki would be required, since the recesses would slice into the thin film magnetic head elements 2. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine the teachings of Chapin with the teachings of Matsuzaki.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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December 22, 2005

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